

Pool of Life



A few thoughts...

Introduction

So you are having a baby!

This is a special time in your life - you are preparing yourself for a miracle!

There is much that is new and exciting happening to you. Changes in your body and your feelings and thoughts. All of these are nature's ways of allowing you to become a mother - after all, having a baby is probably the most precious thing we can do. Children bring much love and joy, they also challenge us to our limits!!

This programme is designed to help you feel good about yourself and welcome your baby, even while it is still curled up inside you.

This Pack contains some ideas that may enhance your relationship with your baby. This in turn will enable you to help your baby grow and develop to fulfil his/her potential.

The Pool of Life is a recording that will help you feel close to your baby even before it is born. It may also help you enjoy the birth itself by teaching you to relax. It will encourage you whenever possible to take your newborn baby straight to your breast to feed - human milk gives the baby protection against germs and helps him/her build up a strong immune system, vital for good health.

The Pool of Life contains a C.D. recording together with workcards and an information sheet.

You can use the information on the cards to help you develop a positive relationship with you're a baby before it is born.

This pack is also designed to give you an opportunity to look at some areas of complementary medicine. It will provide you with some basic knowledge and enable you to use ideas for simple first aid treatment.

No advice can be substituted for a good, caring, and knowledgeable physician.



Framework

Are there any guidelines? YES!

BABIES NEED:

Love: to develop their full potential

Respect: they are individuals in their own right even when so young

Care: warmth, food, water, shelter

Security: safe limits and boundaries

Attention: someone - especially you - to listen to them, praise them

Time: with you to share food, laughter, and play

You: more than anything else.



GUIDELINES

1. Touch -hold and stroke your baby - lots! Babies need plenty of human touch to develop well.
2. Keep your voice quiet and calm - even if you don't feel at all quiet or calm..
3. Eye contact is essential - lots of facial expression.
4. Be consistent-even if you are tired and want to do something else!
5. Babies have different dispositions - some are sweet-natured and "easy" some aren't! No matter which nature, they still need you to be calm and loving.
6. Listen to your baby communicating with you - verbally and non-verbally - by crying at first. Babies don't seek attention to manipulate you - they just need attention. When their basic needs are met, there is a time for you -when your baby is in its cot for the night, fed and warm and safe.
7. Use only positive words. Praise. Never use sarcasm, tease, or name call, even in fun. It is the tone of voice that babies understand!
8. Never say you don't love or like your baby no matter how tired you are.
9. Look after yourself, Parenthood is the most difficult and precious work that any of us can do. It is also extremely stressful.
10. Do not be afraid to ask for help, especially if you are over-tired or stressed - it's O.K. - we all need help now and again!

Communication

Communication is happening at all times with your children, even in the womb, both verbal and non-verbal (amazingly, 80% of communication is non-verbal). Everything that happens to you, how you are feeling, your experiences, what you eat and drink, will subtly affect your baby when its immune system is most sensitive. So:

- Look after yourself!
- Keep yourself safe!
- Think positive thoughts!

Even before the baby is born tell your baby how much you want it and are looking forward to welcoming and watching it become all the wonderful things it may be.

Say nice things to your baby before and during sleep - affirmations and positive self-talk are very real tools to help them through life.

Sing to your baby

Tell your baby stories and nursery rhymes

Describe the sky and trees, seasons, animals

Give a running commentary of the everyday things you are doing in the here and now. Dance, clap out rhythms, and listen to all kinds of music. Calming music can also be used to soothe babies. Some people say that listening to classical music in the womb will help the development of your baby's intelligence!

Make a scrap-book/photo-album of the story of your baby before and after birth to give a feeling of past and future - that change is a natural part of life. Read to your baby, chat about anything and everything - this will help with language development.

Practice being silent, still and at peace-be comfortable with that!

Play with and enjoy your baby, crawl, roll, laugh, tumble about.

Fill your baby with joy and hope!



Breathing and Exercise for You

The body and mind are closely inter-linked. Your posture is very important and learning how to 'listen' to your body can be extremely helpful as bodies are often wiser than brains!

Breathing is a good indicator of your anxiety state. Learning how to breathe properly will help you feel better and take more control of your life.

Stand up against a wall, with your heels, shoulders and head touching the wall. This will help you with your general posture. Step away from the wall and see how this compares with your normal stance.

Everybody needs exercise in one form or another. Go for a walk every day, swim, do Yoga or Tai-Chi.

Here are some very simple exercises that may help keep your whole body well during pregnancy.

Stand up straight, your feet under your hips, toes pointing forward. Let your spine become erect and feel your head balance on top. Feel your weight evenly distributed on either foot by becoming aware of the soles of your feet.

Toxin release: starting by wriggling your toes, work up the body circling all your joints slowly 3 times in each direction.

Let your fingers rest on your stomach, fingertips touching. Imagine you have swallowed a balloon. Gently breathe out and pull your stomach in, pushing all the air out. Now breathe in and expand your stomach, breathe out and push all the breath out. Breathe in to the count of 4 heartbeats, exhale to 6. Do this whenever you have time during the day.

Take a deep breath and hum as you breathe out. Time yourself and see if you can increase the length of the hum.

After your baby is born, regularly place your hand on the baby's stomach and breathe in rhythm with your child. You can make a game of this or do it quietly when you are reading to your baby or giving them a cuddle.

If you feel in any pain or discomfort, more than you would feel with gentle stretch, stop and check with your doctor before you continue.



Touch

- Touch is a most important form of communication
 - It can be started whilst talking to your baby as it is growing in the womb, if you massage your stomach.
 - After your baby is born, massage it each day.
 - There are various points on the body that help children relax:
1. Lightly cradle the back of the head in one hand and the forehead in the other, holding gently for a minute, as you rock your baby.
 2. Hold the head on both sides behind the ears and let the fingers massage the base of the scalp and the back of the neck
 3. Stroke your baby's back, starting with the head, using movements in time with your deep breaths



Reflexology

Reflexology is a form of treatment based on the idea that different parts of the feet and hands represent different parts of the body. It can be used for treatment, or just simply for relaxation. (Note that it is not recommended for you during pregnancy.)

Rub your baby's feet or hands with oils or talc using gentle but firm circling movements, between the toes and up and down the foot.

Pay special attention to the line on the inside of the foot, you can rub this lightly for about 10 minutes per day. When your baby grows it is good to let your child rub your feet to help you relax and build up a time of sharing. Hands can be massaged in a similar way to feet, gently or firmly, if preferred.

You can use talc, cream, or oil. Hold the foot and squeeze gently but firmly, then use your thumb in a caterpillar movement and work across the whole foot, top and bottom as well as the toes. If any part is a little tender then give that area an extra rub.

Try and make a special time and place even if you only have a few minutes to spare and you will soon notice the change.

Have regular massage yourself -you are worth it!!!

N.B. Always use a carrier oil with Lavender for relaxation, Tea-tree for antiseptic, and Camomile to soothe baby.

Food Sensitivity

What we eat and drink can affect our growing babies.

Before the baby is born, it is really important for you to have a good diet just as it is after the birth, especially when breast feeding. Many people have cravings during pregnancy. Your body has its own wisdom. Learning how to listen to your body is vital. It can help balance out any mineral and vitamins deficiencies you may have.

We do not understand completely why these problems affect some people more so than others; however, there has often been a problem either:

- In the family
 - During pregnancy
 - At birth
 - Separation from mother at an early age
 - Mother has severe menstrual difficulties
1. Allergy: brings can have an immediate effect e.g. rash, swelling, vomiting
 2. Sensitivity: has more gradual long term effects, causing toxins to build up in the system and bring symptoms of tiredness, aching learning difficulties etc.

The main clue to sensitivity is a 'craving' usually the thing you have most often, possibly the thing you like best.

Here is a list of some of the most common foods that can cause sensitivities.

- dairy products - sugar - wheat
- colourings in sweets, drinks, cakes and lots of convenience foods
- artificial flavouring
- sweet, fizzy drinks, especially with "diet" written on the label



Indicators of children who might be prone to such problems can include:

1. Unplanned pregnancy
2. Negative thoughts about the pregnancy
3. Unhealthy eating/toxins whilst in womb
4. Stress of mother during pregnancy
5. Chronic morning sickness, illness or accident
6. Premature or difficult birth
7. Been a twin, when other child miscarried or died in womb
8. Environmental/electrical pollution e.g. Pylons, Lead in pipes

Is your baby having any of these symptoms?

• asthma • eczema • recurring ear, throat or chest infections • severe colic • crying a lot • very thirsty

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Observe your own eating and drinking habits for a week and keep a diary of mood changes.

Watch to see if a pattern emerges.

- Cut down slowly on the suspected food.
- Eat fresh or dried fruit.
- Drink plenty of bottled/boiled water.
- Cook food as little as possible -except meat!
- Eat fresh vegetables raw
- Cut down sugar gradually and change to raw cane.
- Eat breakfast.
- Eat regularly.
- Use fresh fruit.
- Cut down tea and coffee.
- Use organic food/milk whenever possible, especially for your baby.



A SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT IS ESSENTIAL FOR YOUR CHILDREN

Warning: Never put yourself or your child on severe diets without seeking professional help.

Relaxation

Learning how to relax is very important, as relaxation allows the body to rest and heal itself both physically and psychologically.

Tension and relaxation cannot exist together - try tensing your fist and relaxing it at the same time? Problems arise when you hold on to tension long after the need has gone - for example have you ever found yourself frowning, clenching your fist or teeth and not even realised you were doing it?

Take the time to listen to what your body is saying. Becoming aware of your own particular tension collecting spots (trigger points), is the first step on the road to feeling better about everything in your life. Your body actually releases its own natural chemicals into your bloodstream that reduce pain and anxiety.

Always begin your relaxation exercises with 7 deep breathing exercises.

Listen to the recording each day for a month. You will be surprised at how quickly you can practice your skills as you go through the day.

The track is a guided visualisation- a story designed to help you enjoy positive your pregnancy and the birth.

It is designed to boost self-esteem and confidence and release tension.

Sometimes pregnancies aren't planned and it is very important to make your baby feel welcome and loved.

WARNING: Do not listen to this recording whilst driving or operating machinery.



Natural Remedies

Here are a few natural remedies that you may like learn about for yourself as First Aid treatments for your family. They are NOT intended to replace medical treatment but simply to complement your doctor's advice. Your doctor will also refer you to a homeopath if you ask.



Homeopathy

The principle of homeopathy that "like cures like" has been known for thousands of years. It is completely safe working not only on physical symptoms, but also on how you are feeling and the way you think.

Homeopathy seems to act rather like a protective cushion allowing the body's' natural healing process to take place.

Mineral Salts can be taken for generalised symptoms

Arnica should be in every household to prevent bruising, it can also be useful for childbirth.

Herbal

There are remedies available in your health shop that can help babies calm down during the day and sleep better at night naturally. Always check instructions on packet.

Vitamins and Minerals

Sometimes under stress or for a wide variety of reasons the body does not process food correctly and may need supplements. Investigate the leaky gut syndrome that can prevent the proper absorption of vitamins and minerals.

Many good health shops will advise you on a balanced and inexpensive multi-vitamin and mineral tablet. Vitamin C, echinacea, and zinc, for example, are thought by some to be good for colds and may be taken in conjunction with anti-biotics.

Bach Flower Remedies

Rescue Remedy is a very useful over-all remedy for any kind of shock or distress.

Child Essence can help calm your child and you might find that some of the other remedies are helpful for particular symptoms.

It is always advisable to check with your doctor or if necessary go to a practitioner of natural therapies

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- Babywatching - Desmond Morris
- How Children Learn: From Montessori to Vygotsky - Linda Pound, Cathy Hughes

CHILDREN'S STORIES:

- Something to Remember Me By - S.Bosack
- Cornelius and the Dog Star - D. Spyropoulos
- Love You Forever - R. Munsch
- I Promise I'll Find You - H.Ward
- I Believe in Me - C. Bowen
- Starbright - M. Garth
- Little Soul and the Sun - N D Walsche
- The Velveteen Rabbit - M.Williams



Remember

- You are the most important person in your child's life, from the moment of conception and probably even before, your thoughts and plans for your baby will affect its life.
- It is therefore important that you look after yourselves -your diet and stress levels, how you are feeling and talking, the sound of your voice, the words you choose will be impressed on your baby.
- There is no blame - just learning and moving on.
- Sometimes things work and sometimes they do not.
- Despite all apparent difficulties, most children grow up to be fine human beings and "good enough" parents in their turn.
- You are a "good enough" parent - "good enough" is good enough.
- Protect what is precious without becoming "too precious".
- Rejoice and delight in your pregnancy -it is the continued miracle of life and you are a part of all the women who were ever pregnant.

"The Pool of Life" programme provides some simple and positive approaches to pregnancy using a range of complementary therapies, together with a few traditional ideas which may help with the challenges of pregnancy, birth and early parenting."

Dr.Edward Danczak
Director of the Centre for the Study of Complementary Medicine





PHOTO
HERE

Name

Time of Birth

Date of Birth

Place of Birth

Weight

Parents

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Siblings

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Family

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Baby's Handprint

Professionals

Midwife

Doctor

Key Names

Telephone Number

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Appointments

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